

1 CORINTHIANS 13

October 23, 2012 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article)

The following is excerpted from the Advanced Bible Studies Series course on 1 Corinthians, which is available from Way of Life Literature.

Introduction

- a. In 1 Corinthians 12:31, Paul tells the church at Corinth to covet the best gifts “*and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.*” That way is the way of charity. He is saying that the chief thing that the churches and individual believers should seek is charity.
- b. This chapter vividly exposes the carnality at the church at Corinth. Walking carnally, after the flesh instead of the Spirit, they were impatient, unkind, envying, puffed up, acting unseemly, seeking their own, easily provoked, thinking evil toward one another, and rejoicing in iniquity. This chapter, therefore, exposes the error of the old nature that is in every man, including every true believer.
- c. This chapter expresses the highest will of Christ for His people. “*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*” (John 13:34-35).
- d. Question: Is “charity” an accurate translation? Should it not rather be translated “love” as in the modern English versions?

ANSWER:

- (1) The Greek word translated “charity” in the KJV is “agape.” Strong defines it as “love, i.e. affection or benevolence.” It appears 106 times in the New Testament and the King James Bible usually translates it “love” but also translates it “charity” 27 times, “charitably” one time (Rom. 14:15), and “dear” one time (Col. 1:13). *Agape* love is God’s love (1 Jn. 4:8).
- (2) Either word (whether “charity” or “love”) must be interpreted by its context and by comparing Scripture with Scripture. The Bible is a self-interpreting book. If we take the context of 1 Corinthians 13, we are given a clear definition of the Greek word “agape.”

- (3) “Charity” is an excellent translation of “agape” when it is not allowed to assume its more narrow 20th century definition of benevolence to the poor and needy (e.g., giving to social organizations such as the Red Cross). Webster’s 1828 dictionary defined “charity” thusly: “In a general sense, love, benevolence, good will; that disposition of heart which inclines men to think favorably of their fellow men, and to do them good. ... In a more particular sense, love, kindness, affection, tenderness, springing from natural relations; as the charities of father, son and brother.” That is the meaning of the Greek word “agape.”
- (4) The term “love” has changed even more in meaning since the 17th century (when the King James Bible was first published) than “charity,” having assumed a more emotional, sensual definition. In the 21st century rock & roll culture, love means lust. It refers more often to “eros” love rather than “agape” love.
- e. This is one of the most lovely passages that has ever been written in the English language and it shows off the literary glory of the King James Bible. Well has the KJV been called --
- “unquestionably the most beautiful book in the world” (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English: Criteria for Excellence in Bible Translation*, 2002, p. 267)
- “a well of English undefiled” (William Muir, *Our Grand Old Bible*, 1911, p. 192)
- “the noblest monument to English prose” (John Livingston Lowes, *Essays in Appreciation*, 1936)
- “a piece of literature without parallel in modern times” (Arthur Clutton-Brock, “The English Bible,” *The English Bible: Essays by Various Writers*, Vernon Storr, editor, 1938)
- “probably the most beautiful piece of writing in all the literature of the world” (Henry Louis Mencken, cited by Gustavas Paine, *The Learned Men*, preface)
- “the greatest work ever written in the English language, period” (Jonathan Yardley, *Washington Post*, quoted in Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, “Praise for God’s Secretaries,” which follows the table of contents).

The importance of love (1 Cor. 13:1-3)

Paul explains that without love the exercise of every spiritual gift and ministry is in vain. Religion without love is of no value before God. Even if one speaks in tongues and has the gift of prophecy and gives himself to be burned, it profits him nothing if he has not charity. This is an amazing statement and shows how important love is before God.

- a. It is possible to have the gift of prophecy and have not love?

Balaam did. He delivered a magnificent prophecy in Numbers 23-24, including the grand Messianic prophecy of Num. 24:17-19, but Balaam was an unsaved man. He taught Balak to entice Israel (Num. 31:16; Rev. 2:14). Balaam was a hypocrite who boasted that he would not "go beyond the word of the Lord" for any amount of money (Num. 22:18) but actually "loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. 2:15).

King Saul also prophesied, but his actions were so out of character that the people exclaimed in amazement, "*Is Saul also among the prophets*?" (1 Sam. 10:11-12). Both Balaam and Saul prophesied without love for God or for those to whom they preached.

- b. Is it possible to bestow all of one's goods upon the poor and to give one's body to be burned and have not love? Consider the Pharisees. They made great personal sacrifice for their religion. They fasted and prayed and washed themselves and tithed and would "*compass land and sea to make one proselyte*" (Mat. 23:15). But it was all done for self and prestige and for tradition and not for love of God and love of man. There are many selfish reasons why a person would bestow his goods upon the poor or give himself to be burned other than love. It could be for personal glory or because of sheer obstinacy or for a fanatical commitment to some misguided principle. Many that were burned in the Inquisition were not born again Christians who died for genuine love of God and man. Many Jews and Muslims and practitioners of the occultic arts were burned. Rome's Inquisition was aimed toward anyone who refused to submit to her dogmas. In more recent times Buddhists have immolated themselves in Vietnam and Muslims have blown themselves up in the Middle East.

The definition of love (1 Cor. 13:4-7)

- a. Introductory Lessons:

(1) We see in this passage that godly love is not what man commonly defines as love. It is not romanticism. It is not a warm, sensual feeling. It is not mere personal sacrifice. It is not a jealous rage. It is not a mystical experience of being immersed into the divine. It is not an attitude of toleration of things I don't agree with. It is not a positive, non-judgmental outlook. It is not a longing for Christian unity. Genuine godly love is not a zeal for world peace or affection toward animals or compassion for the environment. The Beatles sang, "All we need is love," but they knew nothing about the godly love described in this passage. In contrast to any worldly definition of love, the godly love described in 1 Corinthians 13 encompasses

holiness and righteousness. This love “*doth not behave itself unseemly,*” “*thinketh no evil,*” and “*rejoiceth not in iniquity.*”

- (2) Love is Jesus Christ. The definition of godly love in 1 Corinthians 13 is a portrait of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. You can replace the word “charity” with the word “Jesus” and it is a perfect match. He is the “*perfect man*” (Eph. 4:13).
- (3) The love described in this passage is found only in Christ. It is not found in man’s fallen flesh. It is only as the individual sinner is in Christ through regeneration that he can reflect this divine love in his earthly life. Love is the “*fruit of the Spirit*” (Gal. 5:22).
- (4) Salvation does not automatically grant this divine love in its perfection, though. Any believer that looks at 1 Corinthians 13 can become discouraged, because he knows how far short he falls of the full measure of divine love. 1 Corinthians 13 is Jesus Christ, who has the fulness of divine love, but the individual believer partakes of Christ’s fulness only in part in this present life.
 - (a) It is imperative for the believer to understand that his sanctification has two aspects: *positional and practical* (relationship and fellowship, standing and state). Positionally, the believer is perfect before God because he is “*in Christ.*” On a practical level, though, the believer must grow in Christ day by day. The believer’s positional standing depends upon Christ alone; his practical standing depends upon his actions. These two aspects are seen in the book of Ephesians. THE THEME OF EPHESIANS 1-3 IS THE BELIEVER’S POSITION IN CHRIST. The key phrase is “*in Christ,*” which is used 25 times. When the sinner believes on Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour, he is placed in Christ by the Holy Spirit and God no longer looks upon him as a condemned sinner but as one that is clothed in Christ’s righteousness and is “*blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*” (Eph. 1:3). This new position is eternal and unchanging, because it is a free gift and does not depend upon the believer’s own works but upon the price that Christ paid on Calvary (Eph. 2:8-9). THE THEME OF EPHESIANS 4-6 CHANGES DRAMATICALLY FROM THE BELIEVER’S STANDING IN CHRIST TO HIS POSITION IN THIS PRESENT WORLD. The key word in these chapters is “walk,” which is used nine times. The very first verse sets the theme: “*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called*” (Eph. 4:1). Paul is saying, in effect, “Since you have the new standing or calling in Christ that I have described in the first three chapters of this epistle, walk according to that new standing; since you are children of God, then live like it.” See also Eph. 5:8: “*For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.*” Here Paul is saying, “Since you are light in the Lord, positionally, because of your new standing in Christ, you should walk

according to that spiritual reality.” The difference between one’s eternal position in Christ and his daily practice in this world can perhaps best be understood in terms of relationship and fellowship. When the sinner believes on Christ he is born into God’s family and is an adopted child of God. This is his new position in Christ and it cannot change because it’s a free gift of grace and does not depend upon the believer’s works. But the believer’s fellowship with his heavenly Father on a day by day basis depends upon how he behaves. I was born into my earthly father’s family and I have always been my father’s son, but I have not always been in fellowship with my father because at times I was foolish and disobedient and I brought shame to him rather than glory. The same is true in the spiritual realm. I was born into God’s family in 1973 when I repented and put my faith in Jesus Christ, but I have not always been in good fellowship with my heavenly Father because I have not always obeyed Him as I should. Thus there is one sense in which the believer has perfect love before God, and that is in the sense that he is in Christ and Christ’s perfect righteousness has been put to his account. But this perfect love is not necessarily seen in his daily life because that depends upon his spiritual walk and growth.

- (b) The believer must understand that love is a part of the process of spiritual growth. *“And beside this, giving all diligence, ADD TO YOUR FAITH virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness CHARITY”* (2 Pet. 1:5-7). We see that charity is the end result of a process of spiritual growth. Christ is the perfect image of love, and the divine objective for the Christian is that he be *“conformed to the image of his Son”* (Rom. 8:29) and to *“grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ”* (Eph. 4:14). Every believer is somewhere along the road toward this goal. Jesus Christ is the full measure of love, and the believer reflects that measure to some degree, depending upon his growth and yieldedness and the working of God in his life.
- (c) The chief way to grow in love is to look upon Christ, and we do that by looking upon Him in the Scriptures; meditating upon Him day by day, and drawing near to Him in fellowship and obedience (2 Cor. 3:18). The believer cannot grow in love by looking at himself. There is nothing good in us (Rom. 7:18). If a baby looked at himself he would be discouraged because he is only a baby and not an adult. But as the baby looks at his mother and father, he grows toward their image.

b. Observe the definition of godly love:

CHARITY SUFFERETH LONG. The Greek word translated “suffereth long,” *makrothumeo*, is also translated “bear long” (Lk. 18:7), “have patience” (Mat.

18:26), “be patient” (1 Th. 5:14), and “patiently endure” (Heb. 6:15). It “denotes slowness to anger or passion, patient endurance, forbearance. It is opposed to haste, to passionate expressions and thoughts, and to irritability. It denotes the state of mind which can bear long when oppressed, provoked, calumniated, and when one seeks to injure us” (Barnes). Any time I am being impatient in a fleshly way, I am not demonstrating true Christian love. We can see in the Gospel narratives that the Lord Jesus Christ is longsuffering. He is patient with sinners, though not endlessly patient. He looked upon the stubborn Jews “with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts” (Mark 3:5), and He upbraided the disciples for their unbelief and hardness of heart (Mark 16:14). Further, to “suffer long” does not mean that we are to be patient in the face of error. Jesus reproved the Pharisee heretics fiercely and publicly (Matthew 23). Paul warned Titus about false teachers and said their “*mouths must be stopped*” (Tit. 1:11). A heretic is to be dealt with quickly rather than patiently. “*A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject*” (Tit. 2:10). Paul said that he did not give place to the false teachers in Galatia, “*no, not for an hour*” (Gal. 2:4-5).

CHARITY IS KIND. “The word here used denotes to be good-natured, gentle, tender, affectionate. Love wishes well. It is not harsh, sour, morose, ill-natured. Tindal renders it, ‘is courteous.’ The idea is, that under all provocations and ill-usage it is gentle and mild. Hatred prompts to harshness, severity, unkindness of expression, anger, and a desire of revenge. But love is the reverse of all these. A man who truly loves another will be kind to him, desirous of doing him good; will be gentle, not severe and harsh; will be courteous because he desires his happiness, and would not pain his feelings” (Barnes). Again, this does not mean that the man of God is gentle with those that preach heresies. The Lord Jesus, love incarnate, was severe with the Pharisees in Matthew 23. He pronounced woe upon them, called them hypocrites, children of hell, blind guides, fools and blind, whited sepulchres, serpents, a generation of vipers. The apostle Paul was severe with the false teacher Elymas. “*O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?*” (Acts 13:10). Titus was instructed to “*rebuke them sharply*” (Tit. 1:13). None of this is contrary to godly kindness and charity, though it can be done in the flesh rather than in the Spirit.

CHARITY ENVIETH NOT. Since love cares about others as much as itself it is not therefore envious of what others have or what they are. “To not envy is the proper effect of kindness and benevolence: envy is the effect of ill-will” (Matthew Henry). “To envy, is to feel uneasiness, mortification, or discontent at the sight of superior happiness, excellence, or reputation enjoyed by another; to repine at another’s prosperity; and to fret one’s self on account of his real or fancied superiority. Of course, it may be excited by anything in which another excels, or in which he is more favoured than we are. It may be excited by superior wealth, beauty, learning,

accomplishment, reputation, success. It may extend to any employment, or any rank in life. A man may be envied because he is happy, while we are miserable; well, while we are sick; caressed, while we are neglected or overlooked; successful, while we meet with disappointment; handsome, while we are ill-formed; honoured with office, while we are overlooked, he may be envied because he has a better farm than we have, or is a more skilful mechanic, or a more successful physician, lawyer, or clergyman. Love does not envy others the happiness which they enjoy; it delights in their welfare; and as their happiness is increased by their endowments, their rank, their reputation, their wealth, their health, their domestic comforts, their learning, etc., those who are influenced by love rejoice in all this. They would not diminish it; they would not embarrass them in the possession; they would not detract from that happiness; they would not murmur or repine that they themselves are not SO highly favoured” (Barnes).

CHARITY VAUNTETH NOT ITSELF, IS NOT PUFFED UP. It is not proud. It does not exalt itself above others. It does not seek to trample on others in order to “get to the top.” It does not boast and brag. It is not vainglorious. It is not self-righteous like the Pharisee who prayed, “*I thank thee, that I am not as other men*” (Lk. 18:11). It does not treat others with contempt. Rather, it is humble and has a servant’s attitude. It does not “*think of himself more highly than he ought to think*” (Rom. 12:3). The Lord Jesus is “*meek and lowly in heart*” (Mat. 11:29). Though He was in the form of God and was equal with God, he “*made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant*” (Phil. 2:6-7). Jesus taught that the greatest in the kingdom of heaven is one that humbles himself like a little child (Mat. 18:1-4). “This spirit proceeds from the idea of superiority over others; and is connected with a feeling of contempt or disregard for them. Love would correct this, because it would produce a desire that they should be happy--and to treat a man with contempt is not the way to make him happy; love would regard others with esteem--and to boast over them is not to treat them with esteem; it would teach us to treat them with affectionate regard--and no man who has affectionate regard for others is disposed to boast of his own qualities over them. Besides, love produces a state of mind just the opposite of a disposition to boast. It receives its endowments with gratitude; regards them as the gift of God; and is disposed to employ them not in vain boasting, but in purposes of utility, in doing good to all others On as wide a scale as possible” (Barnes).

CHARITY DOTH NOT BEHAVE ITSELF UNSEEMLY. It does not do anything that is sinful or improper or unbecoming to the truth. It conducts itself in the most upstanding and righteous and godly manner. It never veers from God’s standard of holiness. The Greek word translated “unseemly” (*aschemoneo*) is translated “uncomely” in 1 Cor. 7:36. It is impossible to imagine the Lord Jesus doing anything unseemly or saying anything unseemly at any time or in any place, whether it would be something plainly sinful or something that would cause others

to stumble (1 Cor. 10:32) or something shameful (1 Cor. 11:14). It is impossible to conceive that He would have done anything that would have been questionable or “borderline.” Jesus never committed any type of sin; He never dishonored His parents; He never acted improperly in any sense whatsoever. Paul followed his Master’s example in this, as he testified to the church at Thessalonica, “*we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you*” (2 Th. 3:7). It was love that motivated Paul to say, “*Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend*” (1 Cor. 8:13). Fornicators and homosexuals say, “We love each other,” but their unseemly actions disprove their words. The Christian rock crowd cries, “Love, love,” but its unseemly dress and unseemly actions and unseemly philosophy and unseemly manner of speech and unseemly associations contradict its words.

CHARITY SEEKETH NOT HER OWN. This is the root and heart and foundation of love. It is not focused merely upon itself; it is not consumed merely with its own business and welfare and interests and necessities and desires. It cares about others (Rom. 15:1-2; 1 Cor. 10:24; Phil. 2:4-5; Gal. 6:2). The Christian is to live by the Royal Law, which is to “*love thy neighbour as thyself*” (Jam. 2:8). This is a chief characteristic of the Lord Jesus Christ: “*Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*” (Mat. 20:28). Paul was an example of this type of love. “*Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved*” (1 Cor. 10:33). “When ALL Christians make it their grand object not to seek their own, but the good of others; when true charity shall occupy its appropriate place in the heart of every professed child of God, then this world will be speedily converted to the Saviour. Then there will be no want of funds to spread Bibles and tracts; to sustain missionaries, or to establish colleges and schools; then there will be no want of men who shall be willing to go to any part of the earth to preach the gospel; and then there will be no want of prayer to implore the Divine mercy on a ruined and perishing world” (Barnes).

CHARITY IS NOT EASILY PROVOKED. “It means that love, or that a person under the influence of love, is not malicious, censorious, disposed to find fault, or to impute improper motives to others” (Barnes). The Lord Jesus did get provoked, but not easily. One day He “*looked round about on them with anger*” but this was because of the hardness of their hearts and because they cared more about their vain human traditions than the needs of the crippled man (Mk. 3:5). Proverbs 14:17 warns that “*he that is soon angry dealeth foolishly.*” And James says we should be “*slow to wrath*” (Jam. 1:19).

CHARITY THINKETH NO EVIL. It does not think evil and sinful thoughts. It is not malicious and vengeful. It does not think evil about people when there is no good reason to do so. It is not quick to attribute evil motives to others. It is not like

the princes of Ammon that misjudged David's intention (2 Sam. 10:3) or Job's friends that misjudged Job's situation (Job 21:27) or the people that thought evil toward Jeremiah (Jer. 11:19) or the Pharisees that thought evil toward Jesus (Mat. 9:3-4). This does not mean, of course, that love is gullible and that it does not exercise keen discernment between truth and error. It is the simple or foolish man that believeth every word; the prudent man "*looketh well to his going*" (Prov. 14:15). Love thinketh no evil, but it also proves all things and holds fast only to that which is good (1 Th. 5:21).

CHARITY REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY BUT REJOICETH IN THE

TRUTH. Charity knows that iniquity exists and does not ignore it, but it also does not rejoice in committing iniquity and does not rejoice in iniquity committed by others. It rejoiceth, rather, in the truth and in righteousness and in the good things of God. The Lord Jesus never rejoiced in iniquity. He rather wept over it (Lk. 19:41). It was His enemies that rejoiced in iniquity (Lk. 22:5). David knew that Saul had perished because of iniquity but he did not rejoice in it (2 Sam. 4:10-12). Like their Heavenly Master, the Psalmist and Jeremiah did not rejoice at those who disobeyed God's law; they rather wept (Psa. 119:136; Jer. 13:17). It is the fool that rejoices at iniquity (Prov. 14:9). John greatly rejoiced at the truth (2 John 4; 3 John 3). That charity rejoices not in iniquity does not mean that it ignores iniquity or that it refuses to deal with iniquity. In 1 Corinthians we have already seen that charity both rebukes and disciplines iniquity. Love not only does not fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, it reproves such things (Eph. 5:11).

CHARITY BEARETH ALL THINGS. The Lord Jesus bore with the weakness and ignorance of men and ultimately He bore their sin in his own body on the tree (1 Pet. 21:24). The strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak (Rom. 15:1). We are to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2). We are to bear Christ's reproach (Heb. 13:13). We are to bear with trials and tribulations and the difficult circumstances of life (Jam. 1:2-4). That charity beareth all things, does not mean, though, that it bears with sin in the church (1 Cor. 5) or that it bears with false teachers (2 Cor. 11:1-4) or that it bears with the unfruitful works of darkness in the world in general (Eph. 5:11). Godly love is not toleration of evil.

CHARITY BELIEVETH ALL THINGS. Charity believes every word of God and everything that is truthful and right. Charity is not gullible, though, and it does not believe a lie.

CHARITY HOPETH ALL THINGS. Because it believes all things that God has promised, it has hope and confidence that all things that God promises will come to pass. The Lord Jesus never despaired in the face of man's unbelief and the trials that He encountered. He endured the cross and the shame because of "*the joy that was set before him*" (Heb. 12:2).

CHARITY ENDURETH ALL THINGS. It is patient in trials and endures suffering because it believes God's Word and hopes in God's Word. Jacob endured seven years of labor because of his love for Rachel (Gen. 29:20). How much more should the believer endure the trials of this present world because of his love for the Saviour.

The permanence of love (1 Cor. 13:8-13)

Paul next shows that love is more permanent than spiritual gifts and that it should be honored as "the greatest" thing.

- a. He mentions three gifts in particular that will be done away: *prophecy, tongues, and knowledge*. It is not knowledge itself that will vanish away; it is the gift of knowledge that will vanish. Prophecies will fail, meaning they will cease to be given. Tongues will cease. The gift of knowledge shall vanish away.
- b. When will this happen (1 Cor. 13:9-12)? I believe that this passage teaches us that the revelatory gifts would cease at the completion of the canon of Scripture and that the spiritual gifts in general will cease at the coming of Christ.

(1) The revelatory gifts will be done away when that which is perfect is come (1 Cor. 13:10). This certainly points to the completion of the Scripture. In Paul's day the believers knew only in part. Revelation was still being given and the canon still being completed. It is a historical fact that the revelatory gifts did cease to function with the completion of the New Testament Scriptures. The only instances of alleged revelatory gifts since then have been among heretical sects, such as Catholic mystics and Modern Cults and Pentecostal prophets. The gift of tongues was chiefly a sign for the unbelieving Jewish nation (1 Cor. 14:21-22). The sign was manifested at Pentecost and at other times during the days of the apostles, and then it ceased, its function having been fulfilled. The gift of prophecy in the sense of foretelling and imparting revelation from God was unnecessary after the completion of the Scriptures. There is prophecy today only in the sense of forth-telling or preaching the Word of God. We have the perfect Word of God in the Bible. It is able to make the man of God "*perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (2 Tim. 3:16,17). A solemn seal was placed on the last chapter of Revelation, warning men not to add to or subtract from God's Word (Rev. 22:18-19).

- (a) When we look at the early centuries following the days of the apostles, it becomes clear that the sign gifts ceased, and this is something that has been stated by men throughout the church age.

John Chrysostom (c. 347-407 A.D.) -- Concerning the spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12-14: "This whole place is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to, and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place" (*Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, Vol. XII, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Hom. 29:2).

Augustine (354-430) -- "It [the gift of tongues] was a sign appropriate to that era. It was meant to announce the coming of the Holy Spirit on people of all tongues, to demonstrate that the Gospel was to be announced to every language on earth. This happened to announce something, then disappeared" (*Homilies on the First Epistle of John*).

John Calvin (1509-1564) -- "... the gift of healing, like the rest of the miracles, which the Lord willed to be brought forth for a time, has vanished away in order to make the preaching of the Gospel marvellous for ever" (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV:19, 18).

John Owen (1616-1683) -- "Gifts which in their own nature exceed the whole power of all our faculties, that dispensation of the Spirit is long since ceased and where it is now pretended unto by any, it may justly be suspected as an enthusiastic delusion" (Works, IV, p. 518).

Thomas Watson (c. 1620-1686) -- "Sure, there is as much need of ordination now as in Christ's time and in the time of the apostles, there being then extraordinary gifts in the church which are now ceased" (*The Beatitudes*, p. 140).

Matthew Henry (1662-1714) -- Speaking of the "gift of tongues," he said: "These and other gifts of prophecy, being a sign, have long since ceased and been laid aside, and we have no encouragement to expect the revival of them; but, on the contrary, are directed to call the Scriptures the more sure word of prophecy, more sure than voices from Heaven; and to them we are directed to take heed, to search them, and to hold them fast..." (Preface to Vol. IV of his *Exposition of the OT & NT*, p. vii).

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) -- "Of the extraordinary gifts, they were given in order to the founding and establishing of the church in the world. But since the canon of Scripture has been completed, and the Christian church fully founded and established, these extraordinary gifts have ceased" (*Charity and Its Fruits*, p. 29).

George Whitefield (1714-1770) -- "...the *karismata*, the miraculous gifts conferred on the primitive church ... have long ceased" (Second Letter to the Bishop of London, *Works*, Vol. IV, p. 167).

James Buchanan (1804-1870) -- "The miraculous gifts of the Spirit have long since been withdrawn. They were used for a temporary purpose" (*The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit*, p. 34)

Robert L. Dabney (1820-1898) -- "After the early church had been established, the same necessity for supernatural signs now no longer existed, and God, Who is never wasteful in His expedients, withdrew them ... miracles, if they became ordinary, would cease to be miracles, and would be referred by men to customary law" ("Prelacy a Blunder," *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*, Vol. 2, pp. 236-237).

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) -- Speaking of the office of the apostles: "... an office which necessarily dies out, and properly so, because the miraculous power also is withdrawn" (*Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 1871, Vol. 17, p. 178).

Benjamin B. Warfield (1851-1921) -- "These gifts were ... distinctively the authentication of the apostles. They were part of the credentials of the apostles as the authoritative agents of God in founding the church. Their function thus confirmed them to distinctively the apostolic church and they necessarily passed away with it" (*Counterfeit Miracles*, p. 6).

- (b) Even many Pentecostals admit that the apostolic sign gifts ceased early in church history. That being the case, we believe the following observation is true: "Since these gifts and signs did cease, the burden of proof is entirely on the charismatics to prove their validity. Too long Christians have assumed that the noncharismatic must produce incontestable biblical evidence that the miraculous sign gifts did cease. However, noncharismatics have no burden to prove this, since it has already been proved by history. It is an irrefutable fact admitted by many Pentecostals. Therefore the charismatics must prove biblically that the sign gifts will start up again during the Church Age and that today's phenomena are this reoccurrence" (Thomas R. Edgar, "The Cessation of the Sign Gifts," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Oct.-Dec. 1988, p. 374).
- (c) The only "sign gifts" that can be found in church history after the days of the apostles are some strange phenomena associated with various heretical groups. We have documented this extensively in the book *The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements*, which is available from Way of Life Literature.

- (2) The spiritual gifts in general will be done away when we see face to face (1 Cor. 13:12). I believe that this looks beyond the completion of Scripture to heaven or the kingdom of God itself. We are looking toward to being in the very presence of the Lord, to having a perfect body, and to an increased spiritual perception which we will experience when “*this mortal shall have put on immortality*” (1 Cor. 15:54). In this present condition and in this present world we live by hope, but we are waiting for the redemption of the body, when our faith will become sight (Rom. 8:18-25).
-

Distributed by Way of Life Literature Inc.'s Fundamental Baptist Information Service, an e-mail listing for Fundamental Baptists and other fundamentalist, Bible-believing Christians. Established in 1974, Way of Life Literature is a fundamental Baptist preaching and publishing ministry based in Bethel Baptist Church, London, Ontario, of which Wilbert Unger is the founding Pastor. Brother Cloud lives in South Asia where he has been a church planting missionary since 1979. OUR GOAL IN THIS PARTICULAR ASPECT OF OUR MINISTRY IS NOT DEVOTIONAL BUT IS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO ASSIST PREACHERS IN THE PROTECTION OF THE CHURCHES IN THIS APOSTATE HOUR. This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the list. If somehow you have subscribed unintentionally, following are the instructions for removal. The Fundamental Baptist Information Service mailing list is automated. To SUBSCRIBE, go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/subscribe.html>. TO UNSUBSCRIBE OR CHANGE ADDRESSES, go to the very bottom of any email received from us and click "Manage My Subscription." If you have any trouble with this, please let us know. We take up a quarterly offering to fund this ministry, and those who use the materials are expected to participate (Galatians 6:6) if they can. Some of the articles are from O Timothy magazine, which is in its 29th year of publication. Way of Life publishes many helpful books. The catalog is located at the web site: <http://www.wayoflife.org/publications/index.html>. Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org. We do not solicit funds from those who do not agree with our preaching and who are not helped by these publications, but only from those who are. OFFERINGS can be made at <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/makeanoffering.html>. PAYPAL offerings can be made to <https://www.paypal.com/xclick/business=dcloud%40wayoflife.org>

WAY OF LIFE LITERATURE SHARING POLICY: Way of Life's content falls into two categories: sharable and non-sharable. Much of our material is available for free, such as the hundreds of articles at the Way of Life web site. These are sharable. Other items we sell to help fund our very expensive literature, video, and foreign church planting ministry. These are not sharable. Things that we encourage you to share include the audio sermons, video presentations, O Timothy magazine, and the hundreds of Fundamental Baptist Information Service (FBIS) articles. You are free to make copies of these at your own expense and share them with friends and family. You are also welcome to use excerpts from the articles. All we ask is that you give proper credit. Things we do not want copied and redistributed are items like the Fundamental Baptist Digital Library, the print and eBook editions of our books, etc. These items have taken years to produce at enormous expense in time and money, and we need the income from the sale of these to help fund the ministry. We trust that your Christian honesty will preserve the integrity of this policy.